MYSTERY

TALES OF *HORROR* AND SUSPENSE!

mister

MYSTERY

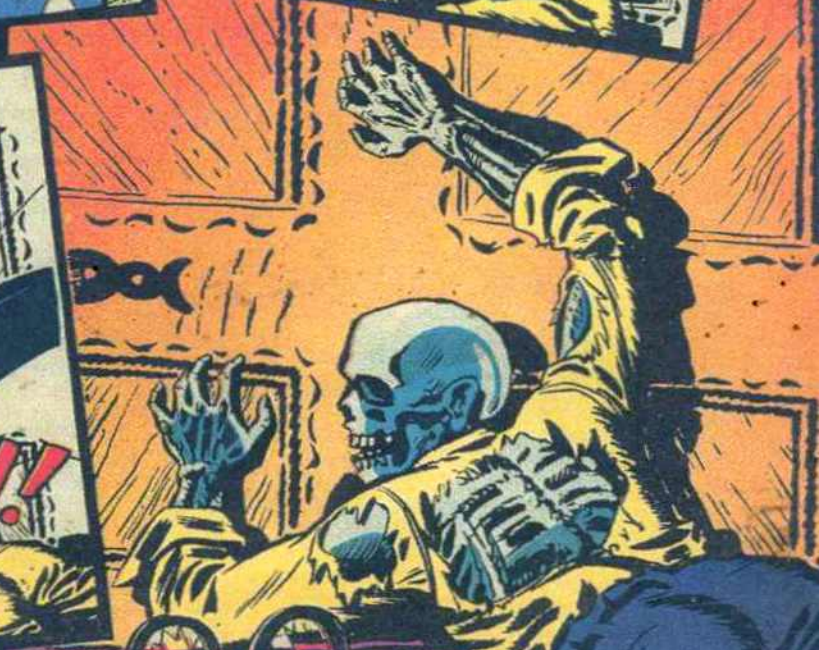
He thought he Heard something--



10¢
JAN. FEB.
1953
No.9

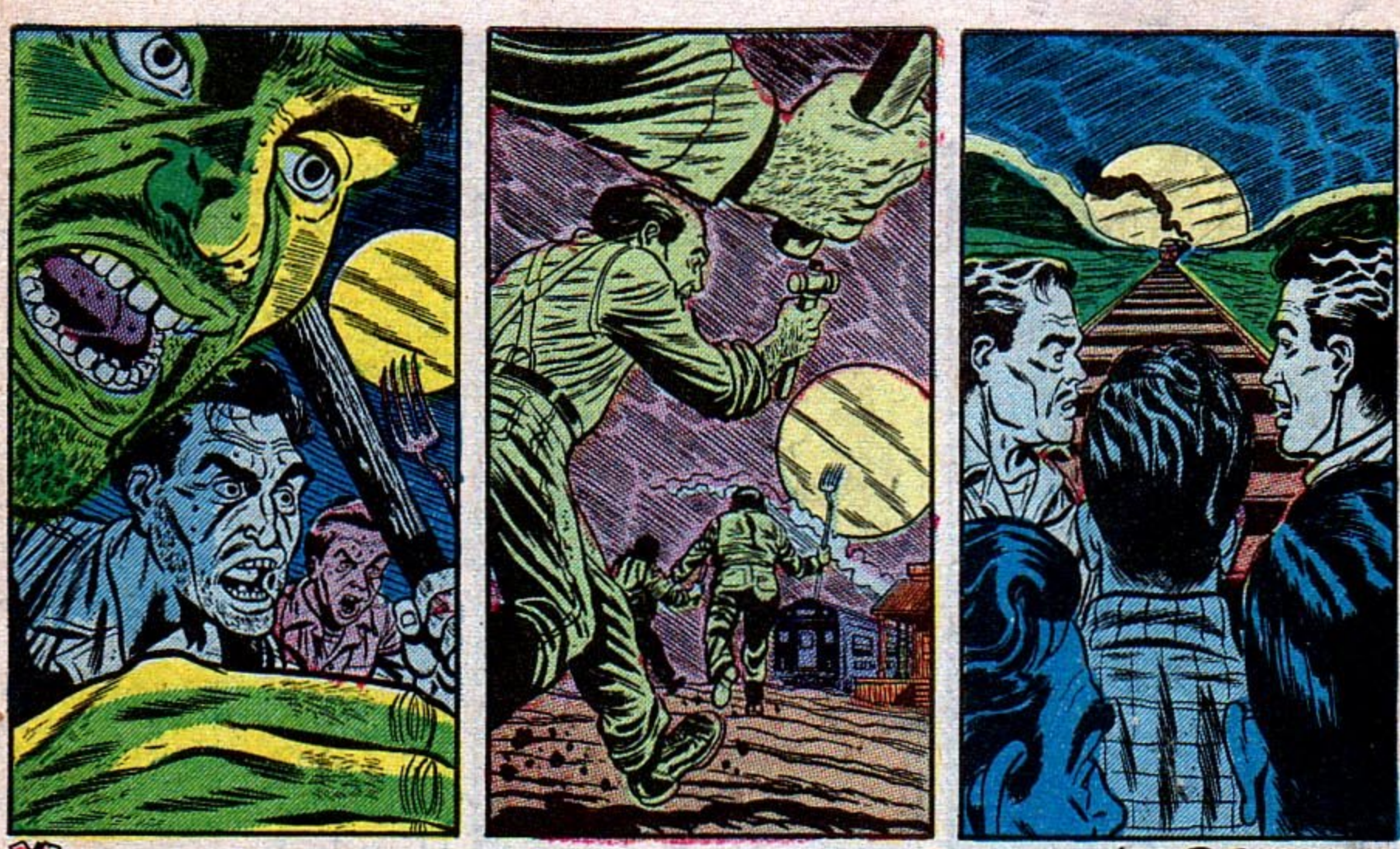








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YOU ALWAYS KNEW WHAT WAS AT THE END OF YOUR JOURNEY--- **DEATH!!**
BUT YOU NEVER FIGURED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN WHEN YOU HIRED---

The Taxi Driver!




YOU HAD TO GET AWAY FROM FOREST HILLS...GET AWAY... BUT FAST!
WHERE TO GO? ANYWHERE THAT YOU COULD QUENCH YOUR THIRST!
BETTER GET OFF THE TRAIN... YOU'RE TOO NERVOUS TO BE JUST AN ORDINARY TRAVELER! SOMEONE'S LIABLE TO RECOGNIZE YOU! THE NEXT STOP...THAT'S AS GOOD A PLACE AS ANY!
ELMONT, EH? SLEEPY LITTLE TOWN, BUT YOU'LL FIND WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR...YOU ALWAYS DO!
ELMONT
WHAT A PLACE! NOTHING! NOTHING BUT A HORSE AND BUGGY FOR A TAXI! AND PROBABLY NO PLACE TO TAKE IT TO...
HMMMM!
BEAUTIFUL, ISN'T SHE? JUST THE TYPE YOU LIKE! ASK HER, MAYBE SHE KNOWS WHERE THE TAXI DRIVER IS... MAYBE SHE CAN HELP YOU!
PARDON, MISS, BUT CAN YOU TELL ME WHERE I CAN FIND THE TAXI DRIVER?
THAT'S ME! I'M THE TAXI DRIVER! WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO?
TAXI STAND
2


WELL, WHERE CAN I GO? DOESN'T SEEM TO BE MUCH DOING AROUND HERE!
THERE ISN'T! ELMONT IS A RESORT TOWN AND IT'S OFF-SEASON! BUT THE HUNTING LODGE IS STILL OPEN... MAYBE YOU CAN GET A LITTLE HUNTING IN!


NOT BAD, EH, ESPECIALLY FOR ELMONT..!
SURE, WHY NOT? YOU'LL DRIVE ME THERE, WON'T YOU?
OF COURSE! I'M GOING OUT THAT WAY ANYWAY. C'MON, IT'LL BE GETTING DARK BEFORE LONG!


A PERFECT SET-UP! NOBODY SAW YOU GET OFF THAT TRAIN AND OBVIOUSLY THERE ISN'T ANYONE AROUND TO BOTHER YOU THIS TIME! AND WHAT A GIRL... JUST THE TYPE YOU'D PICK FOR YOURSELF!


THERE IT IS...THE MOON... THE FULL MOON! IT'S GOLDEN FINGERS LICK YOUR FACE AND YOU ARE NO LONGER YOU!


NO, YOU ARE NO LONGER YOU...YOUR BODY WRACKS WITH THE AGONIES OF THE DAMNED AS THE METOMORPHASIS TAKES PLACE AND FINALLY THE REAL YOU EMERGES... A WEREWOLF!
3

ANOTHER VICTIM... AND SUCH A BEAUTIFUL ONE THIS TIME! BUT NO ONE WILL EVER KNOW... NO ONE WILL EVER SUSPECT! THE POOR TAXI DRIVER!



GO AHEAD... SHE'S WAITING FOR YOU... FOR DEATH!



YOU WAITED TOO LONG... SHE HEARD YOU... BUT THERE'S PLENTY OF TIME! AFTER ALL, SHE'S ONLY A TAXI DRIVER!



SURE, THERE'S PLENTY OF TIME... PLENTY OF TIME FOR YOU TO... KILL... KILL... KILL... KILL!



WHAT'S THE MATTER? WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF? THE GIRL? WHY, SHE'S ONLY A TAXI DRIVER... OR IS SHE?





THE END.

The Thin LINE!

THE VILLAGE IDIOT AND THE GREAT SCIENTIST... WHO IS TO SAY WHICH IS REALLY THE GENIUS? AFTER ALL, WHAT IS THE DIVIDING LINE BETWEEN A GREAT MIND AND THAT OF A MORON? THIS IS A STORY OF TWO SUCH MEN AND...

RAP RAP RAP! RAP!

KNOCK! KNOCK!

BANG! BANG!

THE FOOLS! WHY DO THEY BOTHER ME NOW?


I'M SORRY, PROFESSOR, BUT THIS IS THE ONLY ASSISTANT I COULD FIND FOR YOU!
WHAT! THE VILLAGE IDIOT!
WELL, I HAVEN'T GOT MUCH CHOICE AND I DO NEED SOMEONE AROUND HERE TO HELP OUT!
HEY, YOU, GRAB A BROOM AND GET TO WORK!
HUH? WHO, ME?
HE'S BETTER THAN NOTHING... AT LEAST HE OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO KEEP THE PLACE CLEAN!
GEE... A REAL SCIENTIST! THIS IS THE MOST INTERESTING JOB I EVER HAD!
AND SO THE TWO EXTREMES OF THE INTELLECTUAL SCALE BEGAN THEIR LIVES TOGETHER... ONE ON EITHER SIDE OF... THE THIN LINE!
2


HMMM... VERY INTERESTING!
YES, ISN'T IT... W..H..A..T!!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? WHY AREN'T YOU WORKING?
I-I FINISHED ALREADY! AND... AND I THOUGHT I'D SEE WHAT YOU WERE WORKING ON!
YOU WANT TO SEE WHAT I'M WORKING ON, EH? WELL, IT WON'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE, YOU PROBABLY WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND IT ANYWAY, SO I'LL TELL YOU!
GOOD! I'M ALWAYS INTERESTED IN WHAT MY EMPLOYERS DO!
THIS IS WHAT I HAVE BEEN WORKING ON FOR TWENTY YEARS... A SOLUTION THAT WILL DISSOLVE ANYTHING IT COMES IN CONTACT WITH!
THAT'S VERY INTERESTING, BUT...
DON'T 'BUT' ME... CAN'T YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT THIS WILL MEAN TO SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY AS SOON AS I PERFECT THE FORMULA?
YES, I DO... BUT WHAT WILL...
YOU DARE TO DOUBT MY WORD? GET OUT OF HERE! YOU IDIOT! GET OUT OF HERE!
3


A FEW HOURS LATER...
IMAGINE THE NERVE OF HIM...QUESTIONING MY ABILITY!
I'VE FOUND IT! I'VE FOUND IT! THE MISSING PART OF THE FORMULA!
VERY GOOD SIR... BUT DON'T YOU THINK...
NOT AGAIN! YOU HAVE TAKEN UP TOO MUCH OF MY TIME ALREADY...OUT OF MY WAY... I'M GOING TO MIX THE SOLUTION!
BUT PROF...
SHUT UP! CAN'T YOU SEE I'M ALMOST FINISHED?
THERE...THAT DOES IT---IT'S FINISHED!
N-NOW CAN I SPEAK?
LOOK! IT'S DISSOLVING!
THAT'S WHAT I WAS TRYING TO WARN YOU ABOUT, PROFESSOR...
IF IT'LL DISSOLVE EVERYTHING IT COMES IN CONTACT WITH...
... WHAT WERE YOU GOING TO KEEP IT IN?
The GREAT SCIENTIST AND THE VILLAGE IDIOT... ONE ON EITHER SIDE OF THE THIN LINE... BUT WHO IS TO SAY WHO IS ON WHICH SIDE?
THE END.

SENSATIONAL RESULTS REPORTED IN CURBING

PIMPLES

BLACKHEADS, ACNE AND OTHER EXTERNALLY CAUSED SKIN BLEMISHES

CLINICAL TESTS SHOW 100% SUCCESS

HERE ARE THE AMAZING TEST RESULTS

in **45** cases the pimple condition was completely cured

in **38** cases the pimple condition was greatly improved

in **17** cases the pimple condition was noticeably improved

100% success — in every tested case of pimples

Actual clinical tests of 100 acne patients, with a new twin-action method and formula—show that the acne or pimples were decidedly improved or completely arrested in every single case tested!

Recently, a leading medical journal published the results of exhaustive tests on the treatment of acne. 100 young men and women patients—suffering from acne condition of their skin—were carefully selected from four leading hospitals and clinics. All the patients were questioned and advised on personal hygiene, dietary, cosmetic and postural habits, and other aggravating factors.

As part of the prescribed treatment, a new skin formula was tried. The immediate effect of the formula, was to cover up the pimples and blemishes, and make the skin appear smoother, clearer *instantly!* With this formula it was possible to maintain active treatment during the day as well as at night.

The result, so astonishing as to warrant its being reported to the entire medical world in a leading doctors' journal:

The Acne Was Decidedly Improved or Completely Arrested In All Cases!

Imagine that! 100% success! Every case of acne helped!

With the publication of these phenomenal results Ward Laboratories' chemists immediately reproduced the same formula, used so successfully in these tests, for your use at home. The general instructions given to each of these hospital patients are also included so that the home treatment parallels the one reported giving these record-smashing results. This amazing Ward's Skin Formula is now available for you. No matter what you have used—no matter how skeptical you are—you may at last put this wonderful treatment to the test in your own case—NOW!

Maybe you're among those who have tried every kind of skin preparation without success—maybe you are skeptical as to whether Ward's Skin Formula is the preparation you have been waiting for.

Either way don't delay—you have everything to gain at no risk, because our Guarantee Policy assures return of Double Your Money Back unless you are delighted with the results of the complete Ward's Skin Treatment. So fill out and mail the coupon—NOW. Full 60-day supply only two dollars—about 3c a day.

Better than a Free Trial! You get results, or we refund DOUBLE YOUR MONEY BACK

ACT NOW!
Send COUPON TODAY For Sensational No-Risk Offer!
SEND NO MONEY!



RUSH THIS NO RISK COUPON NOW!

WARD LABORATORIES INC.
1430 Broadway, Dept. 6110-W, New York 18, N.Y.

Please rush 60-day supply of Ward's Skin Formula in plain wrapper at once. I will pay $2.00 plus postage on delivery. I must be delighted with results or you guarantee DOUBLE MY MONEY BACK on return of unused portion.

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ Zone____ State_____

☐ Save Money! Enclose $2.00 (Cash, Check or Money Order) and we pay postage. Same double refund offer holds. APO, FPO, Canada and Foreign please add 50c—no C.O.D.s

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MR. MYSTERY'S MORGUE

WELL, well, they finally gave me a page for myself! (*What d'ya mean? How about all the stories you tell? . . . ed*) If I didn't tell them, who would? Not those morons you have chained in the closet that you call writers? Those guys have a tough enough time writing their own names; sometimes I doubt if they can do that! (*Aww, go on, if it wasn't for that EERIE TALES book of yours, you'd be out of business! . . . ed*) Look who's talking! If I go out of business so do you . . . where else can you get a sucker at the rates you pay me? (*What do you think, you can't be replaced? As a matter of fact, we just hired THE GHOUL TEACHER for our new mag, WEIRD MYSTERIES! . . . ed*) That old bag! I wondered where she was keeping herself . . . last time I saw her was in . . . (*Get to the point, will ya? What d'ya think we gave you this page for . . . to dig up old bones? . . . ed*) Oh yes, now where was I before I was so rudely interrupted . . . hmm, now I remember . . . they finally broke down and gave me a page for myself. Bet I know why, probably couldn't afford to pay the artists . . . or maybe the advertisers got fed up . . . must have had some ulterior motive . . . believe me, I know 'em! But I'm going to cross them up . . . I'm going to turn right around and share this page with you, my readers. (*What readers? You mean the people you give the book to for nothing? . . . ed*) Why don't you take your two noses and hold them for awhile? Anything, but keep them out of my business! (*But how will I smell . . . ed*) The same as you usually do. Heh . . . heh . . . that's a joke son! Yes, I do have readers, if you'd ever read the mail you'd realize that. Not every letter that comes in is an over-due bill! But to get back to my readers, since so many of you have written in commenting on my stories and making suggestions on how to improve the book, I've decided to air some of those letters (*Yes, the air is bad in here . . . ed*) I'll ignore that . . . air some of those letters and we can kick the old gong around.

And here's the first one . . .

Dear Mr. Mystery,

. . . how about some more horror in your stories . . . make them a little more gruesome . . .

Phil Shnapier
Springfield, Ohio

. . . you mean, chopping guys up and storing them in refrigerators and stuff like that? Sure, haven't even *touched* the subject yet. But look for me, I'll be . . . er . . . digging you as the saying goes.

Mr. M.

Now here's a little gem you'll be interested in . . .

Dear Mr. Mystery,

I have a complaint to make. Your monsters don't look monsterish enough. They look like cartoons . . . put more fangs and drool on them.

Mary Sue Pollack
Croton, New York

. . . see editors, I told ya so! You guys kept talking about how far do you go, and good taste, and all that sort of rot . . . when people want to see monsters they want to see monsters . . . not the sissys you have drooling all over my stories.

Mr. M.

Now here's one of my favorites . . .

Dear Mr. Mystery,

I've read every copy of your magazine since it came out a year ago May. What I want to know is how come after the fourth issue they took your picture out of the inside of the book and made you smaller on the cover?

Arlene Soldinger
New York, New York

. . . Ha . . . ha . . . I told you guys somebody was going to complain about that little maneuver. Just 'cause I got too popular you did your little bit to make everybody forget about yours truly . . . but it can't be done, no sirree, it can't be done! (*So alright all ready, so we put you back where you belong . . . not really where you belong though . . . isn't it about time you stopped complaining . . . how much longer do we have to listen to this garbage anyway? . . . ed*) Look, it was your idea to give me this page, not mine. Anytime you want to take it back it's okay with me, I do enough around here as it is . . . empty the pencil sharpeners, wash the windows, clean the floors, dress up the models . . . oh, I shouldn't have said that . . . besides, I have had some mighty interesting offers lately. (*FROM WHO? . . . ed*) Put your eyes back in their sockets . . . all three of them. I wouldn't leave you guys, not when THE GHOUL TEACHER is coming around. What magazine is she taking over? (*WEIRD MYSTERIES . . . tell your readers . . . both of them . . . to look for it . . . ed*) I'll ignore that remark, but I'll pass on your advice, now I'm your advertising manager too, and I'll close now asking all of my fans (?) to drop a line to

Aragon Magazines, Inc.
Mr. Mystery's Mausoleum
949 Broadway
New York 10, New York


WHAT'S IN A NAME?
EERIE TALES
FATE STEPPED IN AND DEALT THE HAND... A HAND THAT JOHNNY LANG TRIED TO CASH IN... BUT SOMEWHERE IN THE DECK WAS A JOKER... A JOKER THAT CAUSED HIM TO CASH IN HIS CHIPS!
BOY, THIS GUY IS REALLY OFF HIS ROCKER!
STERN
WE CAN PICK UP JOHNNY'S STORY ANYPLACE! HERE IS A TYPICAL SCENE IN HIS JOB AS A MESSENGER FOR SCHMIDTS BANKING SERVICE...
DUMKOPF... YOU TOOK LONG ENOUGH! WHAT WERE YOU DOING, FEEDING THE BIRDS?
GEE, I'M SORRY MISTER SCHMIDT, I WAS WATCHING THEM PUT UP THAT NEW BUILDING! GUESS I FORGOT ABOUT THE TIME!
MORON! SOMETIMES I THINK YOU'RE CRAZY! WALKING AROUND WITH $10,000 LIKE IT WAS PEANUTS!
YES, SIR./... ER, I MEAN NO, SIR!


HE TREATS ME LIKE DIRT... AND JUST CAUSE I'M NOTHING BUT A MESSENGER! AT LEAST...
HI JOHNNY, WHERE WE GOING TONIGHT? I FEEL LIKE STEPPING OUT FOR A CHANGE... WE HAVEN'T GONE ANY-PLACE FOR OVER A WEEK!
AWW, I'M SORRY, HONEY, BUT I SPENT ALL MY MONEY ON A MODEL AIRPLANE... GUESS WE WON'T BE ABLE TO DO ANY-THING TONIGHT!
NO PARKING ON THIS SIDE
ONIZ


YOU WHAT! WELL YOU JUST BETTER GET YOURSELF A NEW GIRL... I'M NOT GOING AROUND WITH A NUT LIKE YOU ANYMORE!
BUT... BUT HELEN, YOU CAN'T!
AND DON'T BOTHER CALLING UNTIL YOU'VE GOT SOME MONEY TO SPEND ON ME! THEN I'LL KNOW YOU'RE NORMAL!


A WHILE LATER...
SO THEY THINK I'M CRAZY, DO THEY? I'LL SHOW THEM HOW CRAZY I AM... I'LL HAVE THEM CRAWLING TO ME BEFORE LONG!


AND THE NEXT MORNING...
THIS SHOULDN'T BE TOO HARD NOW, JOHNNY! JUST TAKE THIS $50,000 TO MR. JOHNSON IN OUR OTHER OFFICE AND GET A RECEIPT FOR IT... THEN COME RIGHT BACK, UNDERSTAND!
SURE, MR. SCHMIDT! THAT'S EASY!
$50,000... JUST WHAT I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR!


NOW ALL I GOTTA DO IS DEPOSIT THE MONEY, TAKE A JAIL SENTENCE FOR 5 YEARS, THEN CLAIM $50,000... NOT BAD FOR 5 YEARS OF DOING NOTHING!
NEW CITY BANK
2


I'D LIKE TO RENT A DEPOSIT BOX FOR FIVE YEARS FOR THIS MONEY!
CERTAINLY, SIR... UNDER WHAT NAME SHALL I FILL OUT THE FORM?


BETTER NOT TELL HIM MY RIGHT NAME... BUT I STILL NEED ONE THAT I'LL REMEMBER OVER FIVE YEARS!
PUT IT UNDER NAPOLEON BONAPART III!

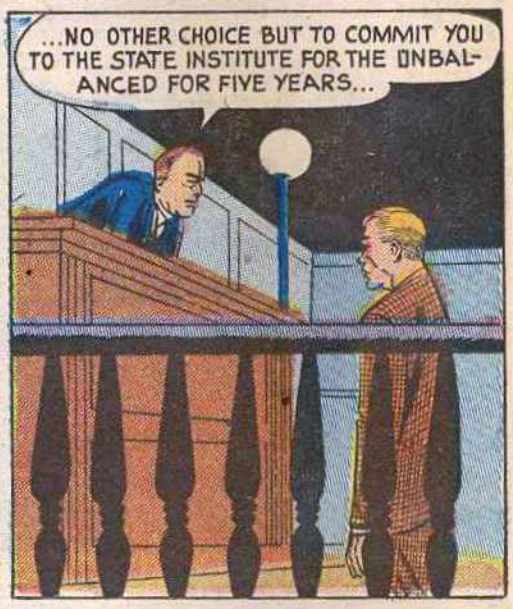

BACK AT THE OFFICE...
WHERE'VE YOU BEEN? JOHNSON'S BEEN ON THE PHONE EVERY 5 MINUTES... AND WHERE'S THE MONEY?
MONEY? JOHNSON? OH, YES, I REMEMBER!
THIS GOLDEN MONKEY CAME OUT OF THE HOLE AND TOOK THE MONEY FROM ME! I FOLLOWED HIM INTO THE SEWER, BUT THE QUICKSAND WAS TOO MUCH!
MONKEY! QUICKSAND! YOU'RE INSANE! MAD!
I ALWAYS KNEW YOU WERE CRAZY... NOW I'M CONVINCED OF IT! AND I'M GOING TO HAVE YOU SENT AWAY! I MIGHT NOT EVEN GET MY MONEY BACK... BUT NEITHER WILL YOU, YOU'RE CRAZY!


NOW YOU'VE FINISHED THE SECOND PART OF THE ACT... NOW YOU WOULD REALLY SHOW HIM THAT YOU WERE MAD!

IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG FOR SCHMIDT TO BRING YOU TO TRIAL... WHICH WAS EXACTLY WHAT YOU WANTED!



THE VERDICT WAS QUICKLY REACHED...



A FEW DAYS LATER...





A YEAR AND A HALF LATER...





AND SO JOHNNY WENT TO WORK TO CONVINCE THE AUTHORITIES THAT HE WAS STILL INSANE...



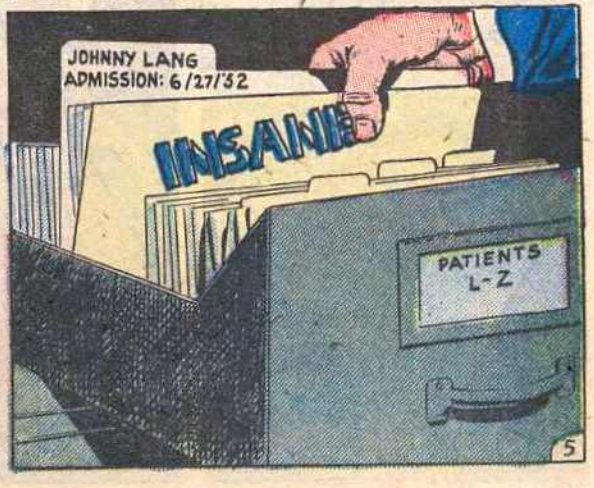






A FEW DAYS LATER THE SKEPTICAL PSYCHIATRIST EXAMINED JOHNNY LANG AGAIN...





THE YEARS PASSED QUICKLY AND FINALLY THE DAY JOHNNY WAS WAITING FOR ARRIVED...













YES... FATE DEALT THE HAND, BUT NOBODY TOLD JOHNNY ABOUT THE JOKER IN THE DECK!

RAGE IN DARKNESS

by John Martin

ROBBIE AND HIS FRIEND Bill left the candystore with the few sticks of penny candy he had bought, and walked down the one business street of the little town.

So happy, at first, because his father had given him money to purchase candy for himself and his friend, Robbie was soon full of misgivings. The sun had still been above the horizon when they'd started from Robbie's house. He'd passed the dreaded spot, the lonely, three-block stretch, thickly wooded that extended from Bill's house to his own. Traversed only by a narrow lane crowded in on both sides, it was a huge, gloomy forest that Robbie dreaded. But in Bill's company he hadn't minded. Now, in the dark, his old fear returned.

In the dim recesses of the wood, lurked, he knew, the great, bag-like clump of darkness that only he could see.

In the daytime it wasn't there; then the wood was a happy, green thing, full of mysterious, magnetic depths. The little stream that ran through it delighted Robbie. He and Bill often played there, wading in the foot-deep waters, watching tiny tadpoles swim by.

Robbie cast an anxious, backward glance over his shoulder as he and Bill turned off the state road and entered the path that led through the wood. The sun was gone, now and the twilight was fading. Before they even reached the area of trees and clumps of bushes it would be dark.

And in the dark, always at the same spot, just midway between two great plane trees, Robbie knew he would see the bag of darkness.

"Scared?" Bill asked him as they plodded along.

Robbie nodded. With Bill—or with his father—Robbie wasn't ashamed to admit it. They both chided him gently for his fears. Bill, in particular, admired Robbie's imagination, listened to his stories. From the books he read, Robbie could re-count, by the hour, fascinating tales of the unknown, of weird and chilling things. To Bill, while Robbie spoke, these things were real. But he could also laugh at danger that wasn't there. Robbie envied Bill, though he knew he enjoyed being frightened a little. Bill would never be afraid of a patch of darkness. The first time he'd pointed it out to Bill, his friend had laughed, walked off the path and right through it.

Bill couldn't see the black bag; nor could Robbie's father, either. At times Robbie thought they were right when they called it just his imagination. But then he'd remember that the patch of darkness was only too real. At first it had only been a pale shadow, small, indefinite. But later it had grown.

Robbie shuddered. The last time he had seen it, he thought it had moved slightly.

"We'll be home in a little while," Bill said encouragingly. "Say, how about playing with your trains, tonight?"

"Sure," Robbie agreed, but he didn't feel enthusiastic. Toys didn't interest him much, anymore. He wished that he and Bill could just spend the evening reading, reading the wonderful books he got out of the library which told of strange and terrible things. Of course, reading things like that would remind him of the thing he feared, but then—and Robbie chuckled a little—he'd be safe in his own home, curled up with Bill before the fireplace, with the cheery voices of his mother and father sounding from the study.

Abruptly, Robbie paused.

"*There—there it is,*" he said breathlessly. "Look, Bill, over there."

Bill paused; his sturdy young face turned without fear as Robbie pointed. Then he laughed.

"I can't see anything," he said.

"It's dark—that patch over there."

"Everything's dark, Rob," Bill said. He stepped off the path, waved his arms about as he walked. When he came back he was smiling. "If there's anything in there it's gone away, now."

"It's there," Robbie insisted. "It didn't go away. You walked right through it, Bill." He gave a forced, little laugh. "And it didn't hurt you. I—I guess it—it's nothing bad."

"Of course it isn't," Bill said. "If it was, do you think I'd go all the way home with you? Don't forget, Rob, I've got to come back this way in an hour—all by myself."

Bill allowed himself a feeling of pride as he turned down the path again. He liked Robbie, knew that Robbie's mind went far beyond his in capability. He loved to talk to Robbie, listen to his friend's stories. But he knew that Robbie was something of a coward —and that he wasn't.

"I got an idea about coupling up both of your locomotives, Rob," he began and stopped.

Behind him, Bill heard no footsteps.

Slowly he turned.

Robbie wasn't there.

Puzzled, Bill walked back the dozen or so paces he'd gone on ahead. He peered off the path. There wasn't a sound. And in all the wood there was nothing visible, just the all-pervading darkness.

For just an instant, Bill felt no fear at all. He trembled a little as he stepped off the path again, toward the patch of darkness that only Robbie could see.

"Rob! Robbie!"

Silence.

Sudden panic descended upon Bill like a cloak of ice.

"Rob—where are you? *Robbie!*"

A rustle of leaves ahead of him began and ended.

Bill ran. Sobbing, blubbering, his heart leaping like some great, wounded beast, he came back on the path, a frightened little boy and headed in the direction of Robbie's house.

Minutes later, he slowed down, hearing nothing behind him. Then, catching his breath, ashamed of his fear, he forced himself to finish the remaining twenty yards at a slow walk. Once out of the close, crowding trees, it was only a moment to Robbie's house. He pounded at the door, fell into Robbie's father's arms as the door opened, babbled his story, the words telescoping into each other in their haste.

To his relief, Mr. Benton smiled. He went inside, came back with a flashlight.

"I'm afraid Robbie's pulling a fast one on us both, Bill," he said. "I always suspected those stories he told about seeing something in that stretch of woods was just a build-up to something like this. He probably wanted to scare you to prove he wasn't scared." Mr. Benton chuckled. "It's just what I've thought all along, ever since he took me along to see the big bag of blackness, as he called it."

"I didn't see it either, Mr. Benton," Bill said. "The wood's empty."

"Except for Robbie," Mr. Benton said. "Here, you go inside, tell Robbie's mother where I've gone. I'll be back with Robbie in a couple of minutes."

The door closed gently behind Bill.

Walking off toward the woodland path, Mr. Benton swore gently to himself. It had been best to pretend to Bill, pretend he was taking it all very calmly. Actually, he promised himself, Robbie would get a spanking after Bill had left—a good talking-to, at any rate. Little boys like Robbie had no right to bait their elders.

The wood closed in behind him as he entered the path.

"Robbie," Mr. Benton called gently. "Come on out, now." He assumed a mock-serious tone. "Come on out or I'll tan your hide."

Only silence answered him. Annoyed, he walked on, came to the spot where Robbie had pointed out the clump of darkness one night some weeks before—the darkness he couldn't see. The flashlight spot, bobbing on the path before him, swung up, suddenly in a gesture of irritation and haste.

"Rob! You come here! You'd better . . ." His voice died.

Before him, between the two plane trees, something seemed to move. Then he saw it, a shapeless, black form, fathomless, pitchy. It was bigger, now, than Robbie had last described it, almost—almost, he thought, as if it had materialized suddenly, grown larger, larger like an animal having dined well on a victim.

The light went out, drowned, as the clump of impenetrable blackness enveloped him; he screamed, feeling it tear at his vitals. Horrified, he realized why it had come for him; it was the hell-spawn of Robbie's frantic fear. It would respond only to what tasted like Robbie now—*to Robbie's father . . .*

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5 DAY TRIAL!



"Flaming Love" Set

No. 404. A wedding set of exquisite beauty. Finished in White or Yellow gold color. Very well made. A real bargain at only **4.95**



Loyale Wedding Set

No. 396. 10 glistening Pseudo Diamonds to resemble diamonds. Compare with wedding ring sets selling for twice as much! She'll love 'em as they sparkle brightly on her hand! Set **2.94**



INITIAL RING for men... ...it expresses your ...personality

No. 401. Something SPECIAL for men! Personalized with your own **INITIAL** in **RAISED GOLD COLOR EFFECT**, firmly set in a sparkling Vermillion-Red sparkling Pseudo. Richly flanked with 2 Pseudo Diamonds from Europe. Remember: these are **NOT** plastic stones. They sparkle with **1000** rays of light. Looks like **$650.** Special only **2.95**

Surprise your friends!

AMAZING PSEUDO DIAMONDS

made by European Craftsmen

★ Fiery Colors! ★ Crystal-Clear! ★ Sparkling Facets!

Thrill your friends with these fiery sparklers! Made in Europe by clever craftsmen to resemble costly African Diamonds! Not cheap plastic stones! Pseudo Diamonds are **DIFFERENT** — full of fire and brilliancy! Used by some wealthy people to protect their expensive jewels. Now **YOU** can own a blazing Pseudo Diamond Ring for a few dollars! Choose yours now — enjoy at OUR risk! Mail coupon **TODAY.**



"ETERNAL LOVE" Wedding Set Real Quality!

No. 311. Gorgeous rings to cherish for a lifetime. Imagine — 12 sparkling Pseudo Diamonds imported from Europe, set in this beautiful Engagement and Wedding Ring set. Beautiful GOLD COLOR, exquisitely designed. They sparkle and gleam on her hand. Look like **$750.** You'll enjoy them forever! The set, complete in gift box **4.80**



Star Studded Ring for Men

No 363. 3 **GIANT** Pseudo Diamonds—the ring of well dressed men. Surprise friends and wow the ladies with this bi-triple sparkler. Setting is gleaming Electro Gold Plated. It's a **KNOCKOUT!** Only **3.67**



BIG "5" for Big Men

No. 319. Extra-**HEAVY** ring with 5 Pseudo Diamonds of great brilliancy. Well finished in gleaming Gold Color. For a big impression, do wear this magnificent ring! Only **3.65**



"Broadway" Tops with Men

No. 411. Ultra-Smart! Quality massive ring for men. Attractive Gold Color with two 1-karat Pseudo Diamonds sparkling with 1000 rays of light. What a **BEAUTY!** Only **3.88**

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A delightful good will gift given with every order! SEND NO MONEY! Pay postman low price shown. Wear 5 days at our risk. MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE — Full price back if not delighted! In any case, the GIFT is yours to keep! Act first!

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127 West 33rd Street, New York 1, N. Y.

Write NUMBER, name & price of articles. Pay price to postman on delivery. **No extras for tax! Satisfaction GUARANTEED or full price back quick! Send thin paper strip to show ring size.**

NUMBER	ARTICLE	PRICE

Your NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TOWN _____ STATE _____

☐ **SAVE MORE** — get more — by sending cash or money order with this coupon! We pay ALL fees and you get 2 GIFTS instead of only one!

HE HAD CARVED AN EMPIRE OUT OF THE JUNGLE...NOTHING HAD STOPPED HIM...NOT EVEN THE BEASTS OF THE FORESTS...FOR HE HAD SOMETHING THAT THEY MISSED...

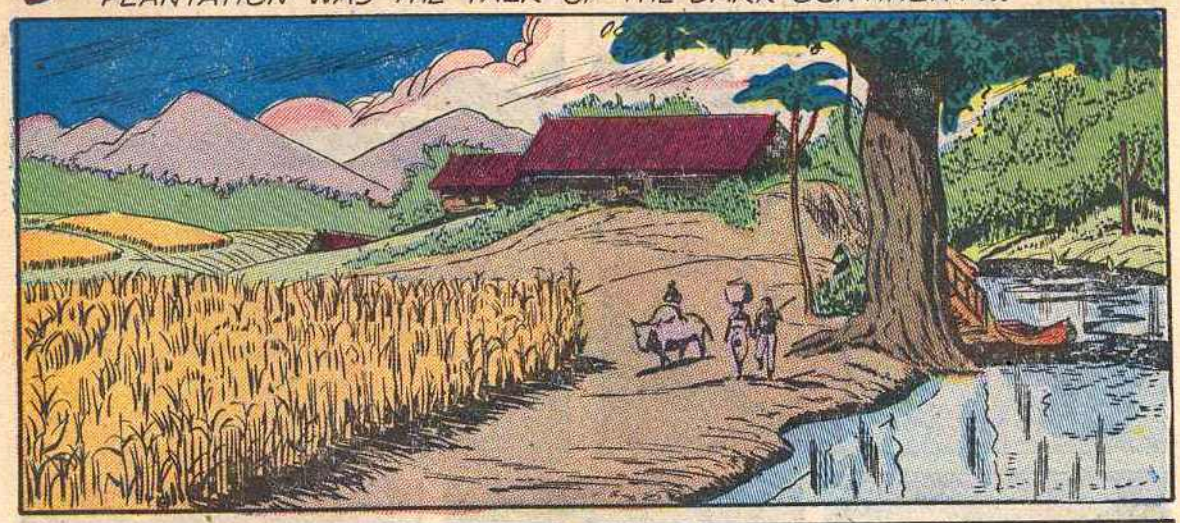
INTELLIGENCE!





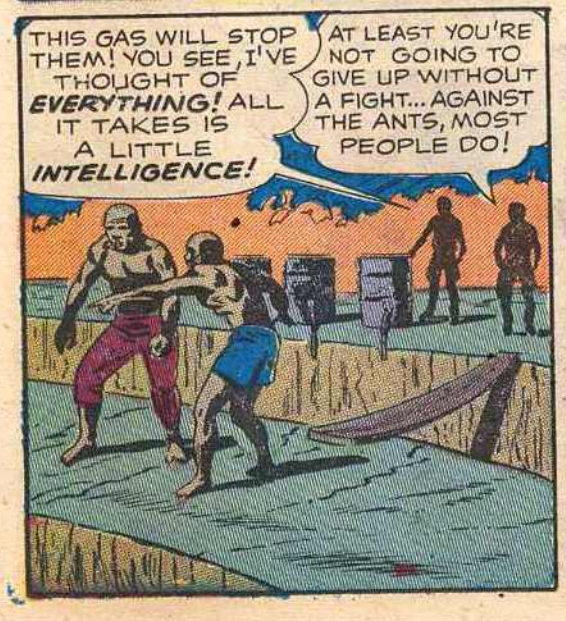


LENHART TRULY HAD CARVED AN EMPIRE FROM THE WILDERNESS... HIS PLANTATION WAS THE TALK OF THE DARK CONTINENT...





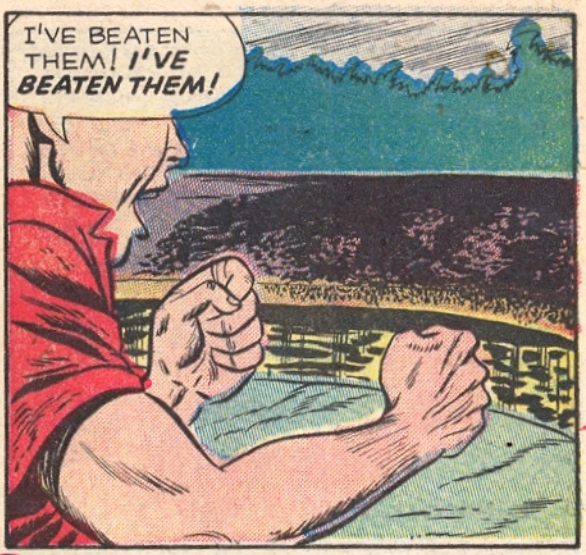







HERE THEY COME! THERE MUST BE MILLIONS OF THEM!
BUT WE'LL STOP THEM... LET THE WATER INTO THE FIRST MOAT!
YOU'VE STOPPED THEM! LOOK, THEY WON'T TRY TO PASS THE WATER!
I GIVE THEM MORE CREDIT THAN THAT... THEY HAVEN'T GIVEN UP YET!
THEY'VE BROKEN THROUGH OVER HERE... HURRY UP WITH THAT OIL!
WE'RE NOT LICKED YET.... KEEP POURING THAT OIL INTO THE MOAT!
3



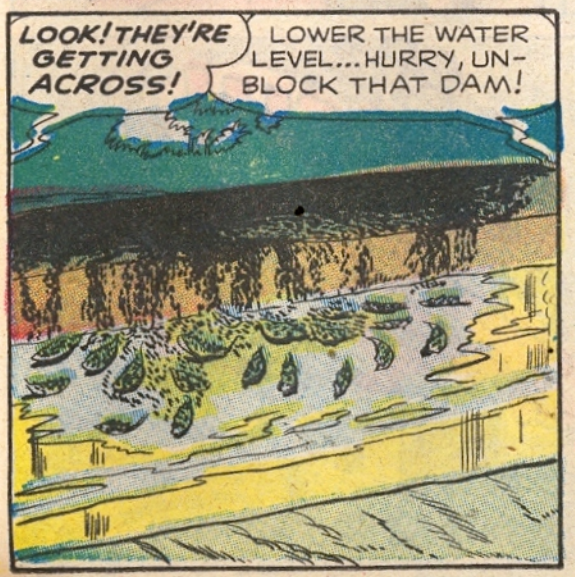


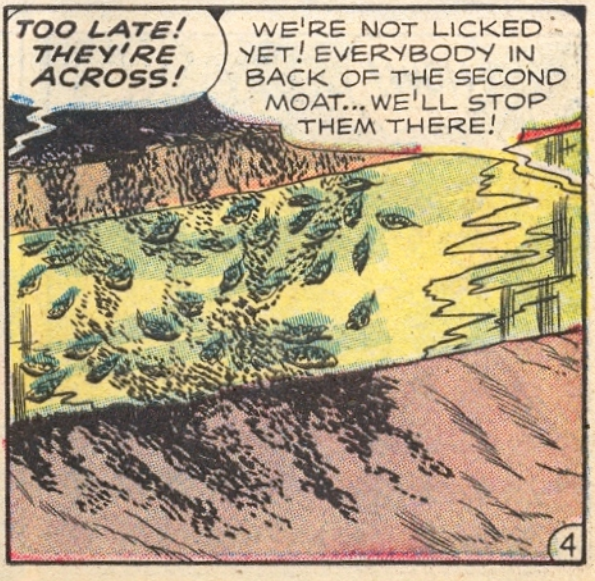
BUT THE INSECTS HADN'T GIVEN UP... NOT YET!



SOME TINY SPARK OF INTELLIGENCE KEPT WORKING... WORKING... WORKING!








THIS'LL STOP THEM! I'M NOT LETTING ANY BUGS GET THE BEST OF ME!
THIS IS FANTASTIC! I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT! AT LAST YOU'VE FOUND SOMETHING TO MATCH YOUR INTELLIGENCE!
LOOK... THEY'VE STOPPED! YOU'D THINK THEY KNEW THAT IT WAS GAS!
MAYBE YOU'VE STOPPED THEM THIS TIME... BUT I'VE A HUNCH THEY'RE UP TO SOMETHING!
LOOK AT THAT! THEY'RE COVERING UP THE GAS! STOP THEM... YOU'VE GOT TO STOP THEM!
NO, NOT YET... GIVE THEM TIME! I KNOW HOW TO OUT-SMART THEM!
YOU'RE LETTING THEM ACROSS! DO SOMETHING! YOU'RE ALWAYS TALKING ABOUT INTELLIGENCE!
GIVE THEM JUST A LITTLE MORE TIME... JUST A LITTLE MORE!
NOW!
WOOSH!
5


THE FIRE... IT'S DYING OUT!
MORE GAS! POUR MORE GAS INTO THE MOAT!


WOOSH!


WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF GAS... WHAT DO WE DO NOW?
GIVE ME A MINUTE TO THINK! I'LL FIGURE OUT SOMETHING!


THE DAM! IF I COULD RAISE IT, IT WOULD FLOOD THE AREA!
BUT THE ONLY WAY IS THROUGH THE ANTS... YOU'VE GOT TO GET THROUGH THE ANTS! I'VE HEARD THEY CAN EAT A MAN IN SIX MINUTES!


I'VE GOT TO TAKE THAT CHANCE! KEEP SPRAYING ME WITH THAT GAS AND MAKE SURE THOSE GLOVES ARE ON TIGHT... CAN'T LEAVE ANY SPACE FOR THEM TO GET AT!


I'M NOT BEATEN YET... AS SOON AS I GET ACROSS, POUR THE REST OF THAT GAS IN AND LIGHT IT... WE'VE GOT TO STOP THEM!
ALL RIGHT... AND... GOOD LUCK! YOU'LL NEED IT!

THERE WAS NOTHING ELSE HE COULD DO... IT WAS NOW AN INDIVIDUAL BATTLE BETWEEN LENHART AND THE HORDE OF ANTS!



THERE WAS NO TURNING BACK NOW... INTELLIGENCE HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT... IT WAS MAN AGAINST INSECT!



THE ANTS SEEMED TO SENSE LENHART'S GOAL... AND DID EVERYTHING IN THEIR POWER TO STOP HIM... BUT THEY COULDN'T... WASN'T HE SMARTER THAN THEY?









SOME MEN LUST FOR GOLD... SOME LUST FOR POWER... BUT OTHERS DISDAIN THESE WORLDLY GOODS AND SEARCH FOR SOMETHING IN THE UNKNOWN! **NEIL PETERS** WAS SUCH A MAN... AND HIS SEARCH WAS FOR...

EVERLASTING LIFE!

I'VE SUCCEEDED! I HAVE SOLVED THE MYSTERY OF THE ANCIENTS... ***EVERLASTING LIFE IS MINE!***

BLACK MAGIC

BUT EVERY CAUSE HAS AN EFFECT, AND AS THE RESULTS BOILED AND SEETHED WITHIN THEMSELVES, THE EFFECT CAME FORWARD... **SATAN!**


YOU ARE NEIL PETERS? I HAVE HEARD YOUR SUMMONS... I AM HERE!
YES, I'M NEIL PETERS. WHAT'S THIS ABOUT A SUMMONS? I DIDN'T CALL ANYBODY!
THERE ARE NO SECRETS FROM THE DEVIL! I, SATAN, KNOW EVERYTHING!
SATAN! I MUST BE MAD!
YES, YOU DID. WHEN YOU LIT THE CANDLE OF EVERLASTING LIFE!
HOW DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT? I TOLD NO ONE! IT'S A SECRET I HAVE KEPT TO MYSELF!
PROOVE TO ME THAT YOU'RE SATAN... I DON'T BELIEVE YOU... GIVE ME SOME PROOF!
A FAIR REQUEST, NEIL PETERS... AND A SIMPLE ONE!
THE STENCH OF SULPHUR AND BRIMSTONE BURNED AT HIS NOSTRILS, AND THE FIRES OF HADES ERUPTED BEFORE HIS EYES! AND THEN HE WAS CONVINCED...
2


I AM CONVINCED! BUT...BUT WHY ARE YOU HERE?
TO CLAIM YOUR SOUL, NEIL PETERS...TO CLAIM YOUR SOUL!
BUT I HAVE THE SECRET OF EVERLASTING LIFE! AS LONG AS THE CANDLE BURNS, I'M SAFE!
THAT'S RIGHT... AS...LONG... AS...IT... BURNS!
SO THAT'S WHAT THE WARNING MEANT! BUT I STILL HAVE SOME OF THE CONCOCTION LEFT!
WELL, YOU'D BETTER HURRY... WHILE YOU STILL HAVE TIME!
HURRIEDLY NEIL PETERS WENT TO WORK. THE FIRES BLAZED HIGH AS HE WORKED OVER THE SEETHING MIXTURE. AND AS HE STIRRED, THE DEVIL SAT... AND WAITED!
A FEW HOURS LATER...
HURRY, MY FRIEND... YOU HAVEN'T MUCH TIME... LOOK HOW SHORT THE CANDLE GETS!
I'M ALMOST FINISHED! YOU HAVEN'T BEATEN ME... YET!
3


AND FINALLY IT WAS READY. NEIL'S EYES GLEAMED AS HE REMOVED THE CYLINDER FROM THE KETTLE... HE HAD BEATEN SATAN!
...BUT HAD HE?
LOOK, NEIL... IT'S LOWER! WAS THAT A FLICKER I SAW?
I CAN'T!.. CAN'T! IT'S BURNING ME! OHHH... NO!
NO... NO! ALL I HAVE TO DO IS LIGHT ONE CANDLE FROM THE OTHER! I STILL HAVE TIME!
IT'S SO SHORT I CAN HARDLY HOLD IT... BUT I MUST! I MUST!
SSSST!
THE FOOL! IF HE COULD HAVE ONLY KNOWN HE FORFEITED HIS EVERLASTING LIFE THE MOMENT HE LIT THE FIRST CANDLE! BUT THEN... WHY SHOULD I COMPLAIN... HEH... HEH... HEH!
THE END.

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